

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A digital camera for picking up a scene with an image sensor and forming a frame of image data representative of the scene with a signal processor, comprising:

a fingerprint sensor provided on an exterior of said digital camera for sensing a fingerprint to produce inputted fingerprint data;

a fingerprint register for registering fingerprint data with specific identifiers allotted;

a memory for storing therein frames of image data so that each frame is associated with one of the identifiers;

a comparison circuit for comparing the inputted fingerprint data with the fingerprint data registered with said fingerprint register to produce identified fingerprint data;

an authorizer for storing therein an identifier specific to the fingerprint data identified by said comparison circuit;

a user interface circuit for inputting an instruction to said digital camera; and

a controller for accessing said authorizer to reference the identifier stored in said authorizer and executing an instruction if the instruction is intended to handle a frame of image data associated with the identifier stored in said authorizer.

2. The digital camera in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a shutter release button on which said fingerprint sensor is provided.

3. The digital camera in accordance with claim 1, wherein said fingerprint sensor comprises a plurality of electrodes and an insulating film for forming capacitors in combination with a finger, and senses the finger's ridges and troughs according to each amount of electric charge accumulated

under the electrodes.

4. The digital camera in accordance with claim 1, wherein frames of image data stored in said memory are associated with one of the identifiers so that the frames are separately stored in one or more folders prepared in said memory, said fingerprint register registers therewith folder names for the identifiers, and said authorizer stores therein a folder name.

5. The digital camera in accordance with claim 4, wherein the folders in said memory may be grouped under one or more super folders, and the fingerprint data registered with said fingerprint register may have folder names of the super folders.

6. The digital camera in accordance with claim 4, further comprising a record control circuit for storing a folder name specific to the fingerprint data identified by said comparison circuit,

    said controller recording, in response to an instruction to record a frame of image data formed by said digital camera, the frame into a folder having the folder name.

7. The digital camera in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:

    a password inputting circuit for inputting a password specific to a folder and adapted to be required to open the folder; and

    a password storage for storing the password,

    said controller outputting, in response to an instruction to output a folder from said memory to a recording medium, the folder and the password specific to the folder to the recording medium.

8. The digital camera in accordance with claim 1, wherein said authorizer stores no identifier as long as no fingerprint data is identified by said comparison circuit,

    said controller executing, in response to an instruction to register new fingerprint data with said fingerprint register, the instruction in the case said authorizer contains a folder name specific to the fingerprint data registered with said register.

9. A method of personal identification for use in a digital camera, comprising the steps of:

    inputting fingerprint data to the digital camera;

    checking if the inputted fingerprint data is identical with fingerprint data registered with a fingerprint register of the digital camera; and

    registering the inputted fingerprint data having an identifier with the fingerprint register in the case no fingerprint data is registered with the register.

10. The method in accordance with claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

    comparing the inputted fingerprint data with the fingerprint data registered with the fingerprint register in the case fingerprint data is registered with the fingerprint register; and

    turning off the power of the digital camera in the case no fingerprint data is identified with the inputted fingerprint data.

11. The method in accordance with claim 10, further comprising the steps of:

    storing the identifier of the inputted fingerprint data in an authorizer in the case the registered fingerprint data is identified with the inputted fingerprint data;

checking if an instruction inputted to the digital camera is intended for a new fingerprint registration; and registering newly inputted fingerprint data with the fingerprint register in the case the instruction inputted is intended for a new fingerprint registration.

12. The method in accordance with claim 11, further comprising the step of executing the instruction inputted if the instruction is intended to handle a frame of image data associated with an identifier the identifier stored in the authorizer.